

## **Sandra H. Johnson**

Professor of Law

Tenet Endowed Chair in Health Law and Ethics

Sandra Johnson's scholarship has helped form the field of health law. The casebook she co-authored in 1987, *Health Law — Cases, Materials and Problems*, was the first to use the title of "health law." Now in its 5th edition, the book has been used in more than 150 universities in the United States and has been cited more than 500 times in scholarly articles and court opinions. Johnson is also co-author of the treatise, *Health Law*, which the U.S. Supreme Court has cited three times — a rarity for such publications.

Professor Johnson's research interests include long-term health care, medical licensure and bioethics. A prolific writer, her work has been published in prestigious journals, including the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. For the past seven years she has been exploring regulatory issues in pain management.

"When you explore the reasons why doctors and nurses undertreat pain, some of them have to do with legal constraints," says Johnson. "They're afraid if they prescribe opioids for non-terminal, non-cancer pain patients they could lose their licenses, and their fears sometimes are well founded. Our studies showed that some state medical boards evaluated and disciplined doctors based on how much they prescribed and how long they prescribed for a particular patient. That's inappropriate for chronic pain management. Patients need the medication for as long as they need it."

In collaboration with other scholars at the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics, Professor Johnson helped draft the Model Pain Relief Act that has been adopted by some state legislatures and consulted with the Federation of State Medical Boards in developing standards that are being used by many state medical boards. She also helped develop the Mayday Scholars Program, which encourages legal scholars to turn their talent and time toward the issue of improving pain management. Her next project is evaluating pain management in emergency medicine.

Professor Johnson was an assistant law professor at New York Law School before joining Saint Louis University in 1978. In 1982, she became founding director of the Center for Health Law Studies, now recognized as one of the top health law centers in the country. She served as interim dean of the law school from 1991-92 and was provost of Saint Louis University from 1998-2002 before resuming teaching full time.

She holds the Tenet Endowed Chair in Health Law and Ethics at Saint Louis University Center for Health Care Ethics. She also has secondary teaching appointments in the School of Medicine and School of Public Health. "Health law is defined by context," says Johnson. "Some of the issues we encounter are beyond our skills as lawyers and I believe it's critical to develop interdisciplinary expertise if we're to improve health care."